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ABSTRACT

The professional development activities in which trainers and vocational teachers are engaging to acquire new expertise in e-learning were examined through a survey that was completed by 446 individuals. Nearly 80% of the respondents were from within the European Union (EU). The rest came from other European countries, North American, Australia, or New Zealand. Key findings were as follows: (1) 60% had undertaken informal self-development through a range of media; (2) informal learning tended to be highest among respondents from nontraining public sector organizations and consultants; (3) 30.5% had formal classroom-based training, 18.6% had undertaken formal World Wide Web-based training programs, and 16.4% had undertaken some form of hybrid (Web and classroom) or blended formal training; (4) 16.6% had not undertaken any professional development in relation to e-learning in the previous 12-24 months; (5) the most common reasons for not undertaking any professional development were lack of time and lack of funds; (7) trainers and vocational teachers were undertaking less information and computer technology skills development and moving into improving their expertise in pedagogical and management issues in relation to e-learning; (8) most respondents rated their current trainer training programs poor or fair; and (9) most respondents funded most of the cost of their professional development themselves. (Contains 7 figures) (MN)

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E-learning and the professional development of trainers and vocational teachers

This survey was carried out between 11th September and 5th November 2001. It was promoted to registrants of the ETV and was completed online by 446 respondents.

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- Subject domains
- View concerning quality of offerings
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Introduction

This report highlights some of the main findings and aims to present a snapshot of how trainers and vocational teachers are acquiring new expertise in e-learning, what training and professional development they're undertaking, whether it is taking place in work time or their own time, if it is through formal or informal learning and who is bearing the cost of the investment. Readers of this report are strongly recommended to read this report in conjunction with the report on Trainers' skills for e-learning from October 2000, which highlights skills needs and competences of trainers and vocational teachers in relation to e-learning.

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The respondents

Geographical location

446 respondents completed the survey, of which almost 80% came from within the EU and a further 7.9% came from other European countries. Almost 5% came from North America and 3.8% came from Australia and/or New Zealand.

Organisation/employment field

Over 45% came from public training organisations, vocational schools or Higher and Further education. In the private training sector, 14.1% are employed in private firms, together with a further 15.3% who are training consultants, and 5.9% that are independent teachers and trainers. Of the 15.7% that list themselves as 'Other' - most are also directly involved in training.

Earnings

When asked to give their personal earnings from teaching/training, 16.3% earn more than €50,000 (of which a quarter earn more than €75,000). There are some differences in earnings some of which may be a surprise to readers. Earning over €50,000 are 11% of those employed in public training organisations, 17% of consultants and 19% of those in Higher, and institutes of further education and vocational training.

30% earn between €30-50,000 and with the exception of self-employed, teachers and trainers at 16%, this is similar across respondents from all types of organisations. Over 25% of all respondents earn less than €10,000, this rises to 35% among those employed in private training firms and 36% of self employed teachers and trainers. It would be interesting to know what other occupational activities they undertake and why those employed in private training firms have more low earners than the public sector and why the majority of low earners among self employed teachers and trainers are part time and willingly so? Perhaps if you have participated in the survey, you might join the discussion group to comment on this? It is obvious that employment characteristics have an impact on investment in personal development, how it is undertaken and where the costs are borne.

Gender

The ratio of male to female respondents was 61.8/38.2%. As might be expected, there are gender based differences in earnings with 19% of males and 33% of females earning less than €10,000, 31% of males and 26% of females earning between 30-50,000 and 20% of males but only 8% of females earning more than €50,000.

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Recent professional development in relation to e-learning

60% have undertaken informal self-development through a range of media. Informal learning tends to be highest among respondents from non-training public sector organisations and consultants. 30.5% have had formal classroom based training, this is lowest among consultants and self employed teachers and trainers. 18.6% have undertaken formal web based training programmes (much lower among respondents from public training organisations) and 16.4% have undertaken some form of hybrid (Web and classroom) or blended formal training. This slightly lower among respondents from public training organisations and those from public non-training organisations, and generally lower among consultants and respondents from higher and further education.

16.6% said they had not undertaken any professional development in relation to e-learning in the last 12-24 months and gave a variety of reasons. 20% of respondents from private non-training organisations said they had no professional development in relation to Learning as did 19% of those employed in public training organisations. The most common reasons for not undertaking any professional development were lack of time or funds.

Majority of respondents use informal means of professional development to improve their e-learning expertise

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Subject domains

Over half the respondents had training in ICT skills in 2000 but this had dropped significantly in 2001 to just over 17% indicating a move away to other areas of competence. This finding is common across all types of respondents. This move away from ICT skills is supported by the fact that 'Exploration of new pedagogical approaches in e-learning' increased from 0% in 2000 to 24.2% in 2001 and 'Skills relating to managing e-learning projects including integration of learning management systems into your workplace' from 0% in 2000 to 18.9% in 2001.

Some interesting differences emerge here in terms of employment characteristics and learning preferences. Pedagogical interests are much lower among private training companies and trainers in private non-training organisations. On the other hand, training in developing 'skills relating to management' are much lower among public training providers, Colleges of further and higher education and self employed teachers and trainers. Overall, however, the results suggest a maturing of expertise as trainers and vocational teachers recognise that being able to use the technology is only a first step towards integrating technology in learning.

Interestingly, the proportion of those spending time of learning how to design e-learning content is quite high - 26.2% in 2000 although this drops to 19.2% in 2001. Very few (2.1% in 2001) are undertaking skills development for emoderation in spite of emphasis placed on these skills in a previous survey (Trainers' skills for e-learning). About 5% in both years have been learning about e-assessment.

Trainers and vocational teachers are undertaking less ICT skills development and moving into improving expertise in pedagogical and management issues in relation to e-learning

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View concerning quality of offerings

Ratings concerning the quality of training and professional development programmes are generally low. 21% rate them poor, 45% only fair and only 7% give a very good and 1% give an excellent rating based on their experiences. Highest dissatisfaction is among public sector respondents and consultants. The overall low ratings may be attributable to the fact that training trainer programmes in this domain are very immature and often somewhat experimental. Perhaps you have a view on this and would like to comment? Post your views to our discussion forum.

Most respondents rate current training trainer programmes poor or fair only

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Percentage of personal development time spent on e-learning

Irrespective of the amount of professional development time spent on e-learning, more of it was informal than formal in 2000 and is again in 2001.

Over 36% are spending between 1-4% of their work time in professional development relating to e-learning in 2001, a slight decrease from 2000. 16.6% spent 5-10% of work time on professional development relating to e-learning in 2000, with 19.6% doing so in 2001. 25.7% spent 5-10% of their professional development time outside work hours on e-learning in 2000, dropping to 21.2% in 2001. Interestingly, demonstrating perhaps early adopters and leaders, just over 10% in both years spent more than 25% of their informal professional development time on e-learning - in fact, respondents overall spend a higher percentage of their professional development time outside work on e-learning than they do in work time.

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Who supports the investment?

As might be expected, employers cover the costs of formal and informal (do they know?) professional development in work time much more than they do outside of work time. Well over half say their employers pay for 100% of the costs for formal programmes in work time with a further almost 10% sharing costs for these programmes with their employers. These formal at work programmes also have funding from national and EU programmes with funding for 8.3% coming from national programmes and a further 9% from EU funded programmes.
A higher percentage of respondents from the public sector (Public training companies, public non-training companies and higher and further education) say they have 100% of their costs covered by the employer than the private sector. Only 20% of those taking formal programmes outside work time have these programmes funded by employers, although again over 10% share costs. A higher percentage of respondents from private training companies say that for formal programmes outside work time, they have their costs paid for by their employer or at least shared with the employer.

In the case of informal learning, 27% of respondents are paying for the full costs themselves even though they are doing so within work time (costs are likely to include resources such as books, CDROMs etc and non accredited web programmes) with a further 15% sharing the costs with employers. Informal programmes and activities outside of work time are largely funded by learners themselves although about 18.3% have their employers pay some or all of the costs associated with this professional development.

When formal and informal resources and time spent are taken together, most respondents fund most of the cost themselves

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Where the money is spent

In 2000, the majority (73%) spent less than €1000 on e-learning related course fees, and a further 19.2% spent between €1-2000. There was a small shift in 2001, with just under 70% spending less than €1000 and more than 23% spending €1-2000.
Books remain a huge source of importance in e-learning professional development and over 87% spent up to €1000 in 2001, with a 3% drop in 2001. Spending between €1-2000 on books went from 8.8% in 2000 to 11.7% in 2001.

CDROMs remained very significant with very similar spending patterns to books in both years.

Travel and subsistence cost up to €1000 for about 70% of respondents for both years and about 24% spent between €1-2000 again in both years. There was a slight rise in those spending in excess of €2000 in 2001. This suggests that trainers and vocational teachers are still travelling to attend courses, seminars and professional development events and the majority still tend to attend in person rather than log-on to online programmes. Is this preference due to lack of good quality web programmes, lack of motivation to use the web for professional development or other reasons? What's your view? Join our discussion forum and help us to understand this issue more.

With regard to cost of the time away from work, 67% of respondents estimated it to be less than €1000 per annum (suggesting that most personal development programmes are relatively local), almost 20% said it cost between €1-2000 and 7.6% between €3-5000 in 2000. In 2001, this cost increased slightly (perhaps reflecting the need for more advanced and less available local programmes?) with almost 24% estimating a cost of €1-2000 for time off work.

Adding all costs together, a majority of respondents are spending up to €6000 a year on professional development relating to e-learning and between 10-20% considerably more. The costs associated with professional development appear to be rising but in spite of that, the vast majority will spend more rather than less time on e-learning professional development in the future.

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Future

The vast majority of respondents anticipate spending more rather than less time on e-learning professional development in the future. Many see it as a necessity because

> *'it will be the basic factor of the competitive edge in the very near future',*
>
> *'there is a clear learning need established',*
>
> *'customers ask for it',*
>
> *'the amount of e-learning materials for our members will increase enormously in the next five years',*
>
> *'it is the new era of learning. We have to develop flexible education for everyone in the EU',*
>
> *'I cannot do my work without learning',*
>
> *'E-learning is an essential part in the mixture of present and future learning tools'.*

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Summary

The most remarkable finding is the move away from the emphasis on ICT skills to pedagogical and management skills. This is hugely encouraging and reflects the awareness evident in the 2000 survey on Trainers' skills that e-learning expertise among trainers and vocational teachers will be much more than simply being able to manipulate the technology. Also interesting is the difference between the public and private sector on the emphasis they place on new skills/knowledge - pedagogical and managerial.

The most serious result is that the current offerings are rated so poorly and there is an obvious need to improve the quality of formal and informal professional development programmes and resources. Do you know of very high quality and really useful courses and resources? Have you experience of web-based programmes, resources, discussion groups and other means of formal and informal professional development that you can recommend. Please add them to our discussion forum so that our community can benefit from your experience. Don't forget to give the website address and/or email/postal address. You might also like to visit the TTnet pages here at the ETV where you will find reports and a discussion forum on trainer skills.

If you have comments on this survey or other surveys, please also add them to our forum or email us at info@trainingvillage.gr

Survey designed and report written by Jane Massy with the assistance of Eva Smirli for the ETV.

November 2001

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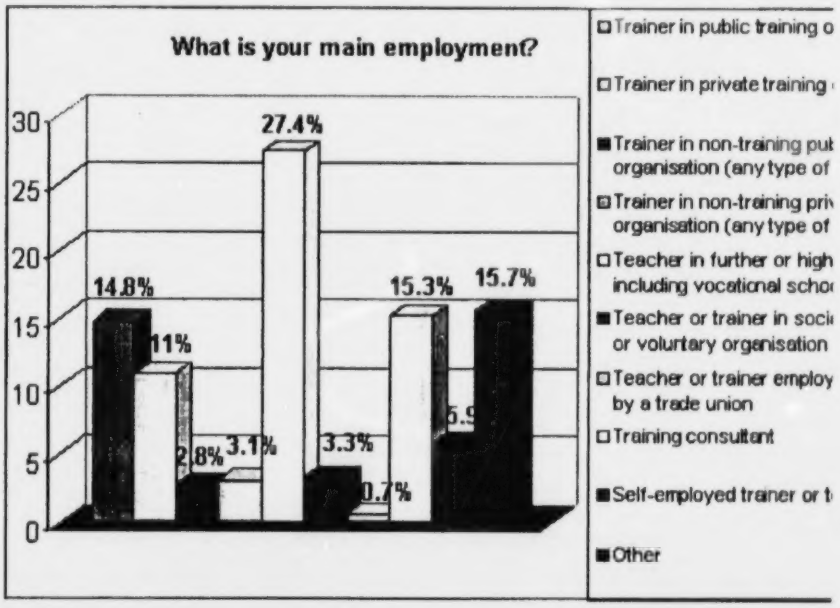
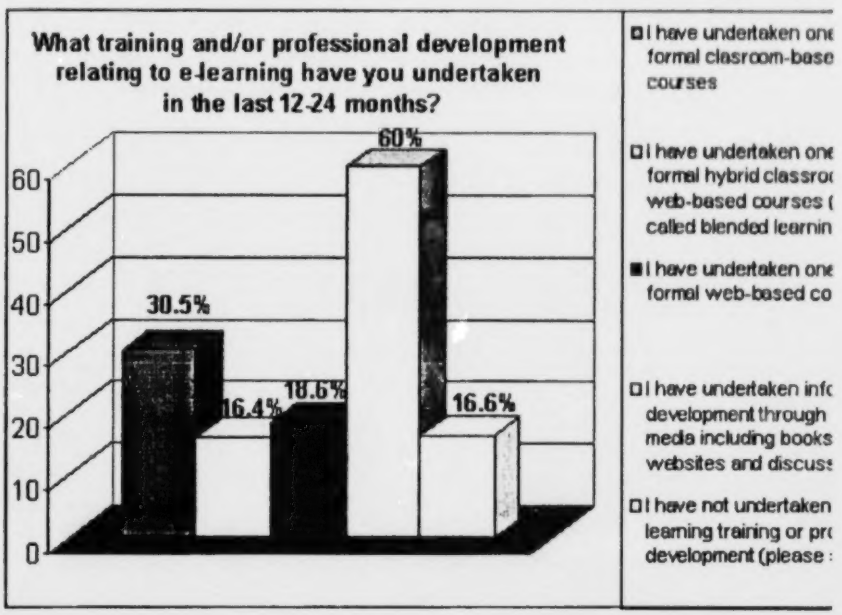
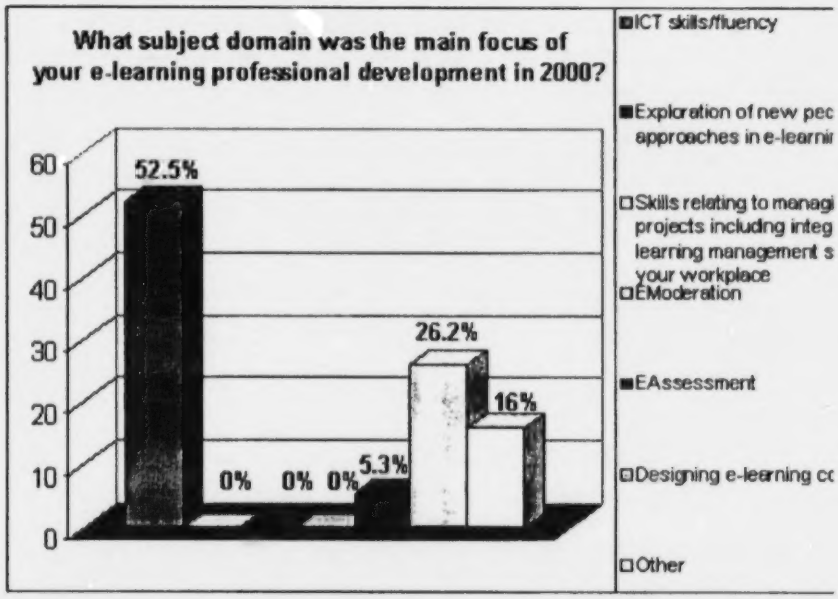
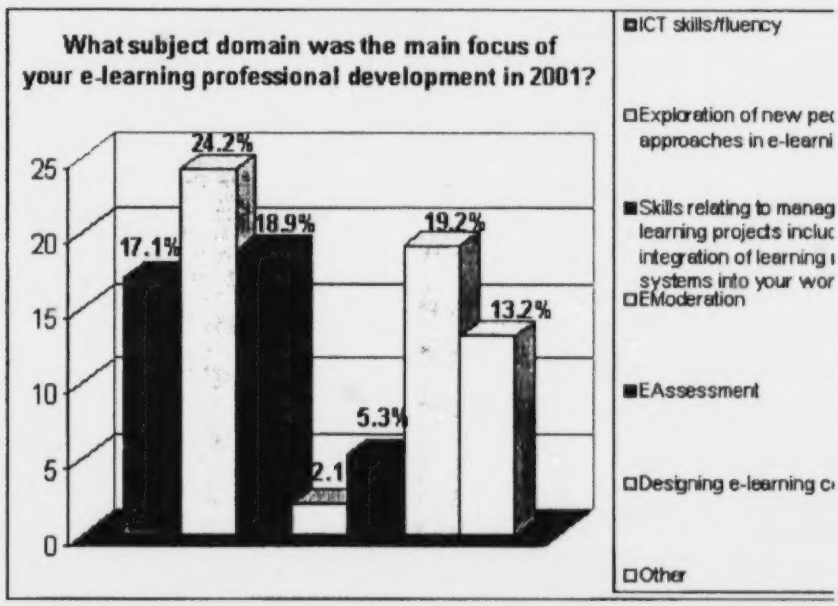



What training and/or professional development relating to e-learning have you undertaken in the last 12-24 months?
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
30.5%
16.4%
18.6%
60%
16.6%
I have undertaken one formal clasroom-base courses
I have undertaken one formal hybrid classro web-based courses called blended learnin
I have undertaken one formal web-based co
I have undertaken info development through media including books websites and discuss
I have not undertaken learning training or pr development (please


What subject domain was the main focus of your e-learning professional development in 2000?
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
52.5%
0%
0%
0%
5.3%
26.2%
16%
ICT skills/fluency
Exploration of new pec approaches in e-learni
Skills relating to manag projects including integ learning management s your workplace
EModeration
EAssessment
Designing e-learning cc
Other


What subject domain was the main focus of your e-learning professional development in 2001?
25
20
15
10
5
0
17.1%
24.2%
18.9%
2.1
5.3%
19.2%
13.2%
ICT skills/fluency
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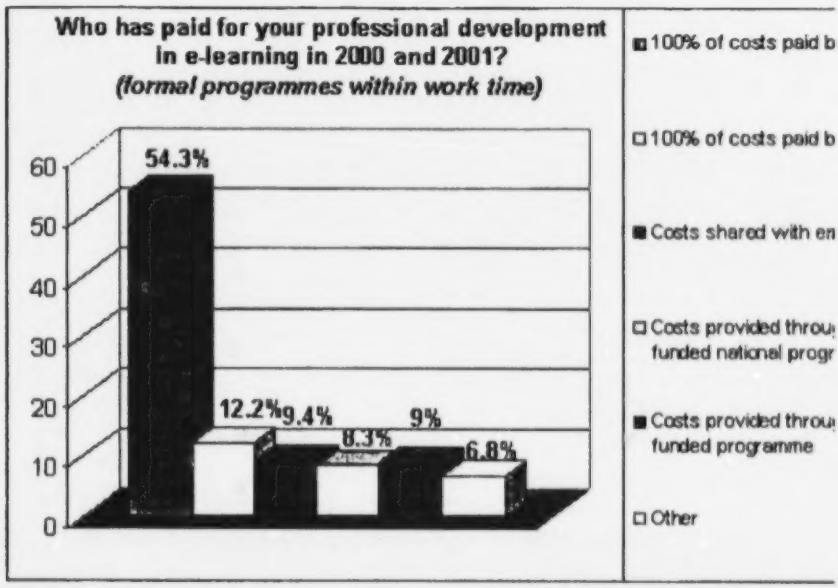

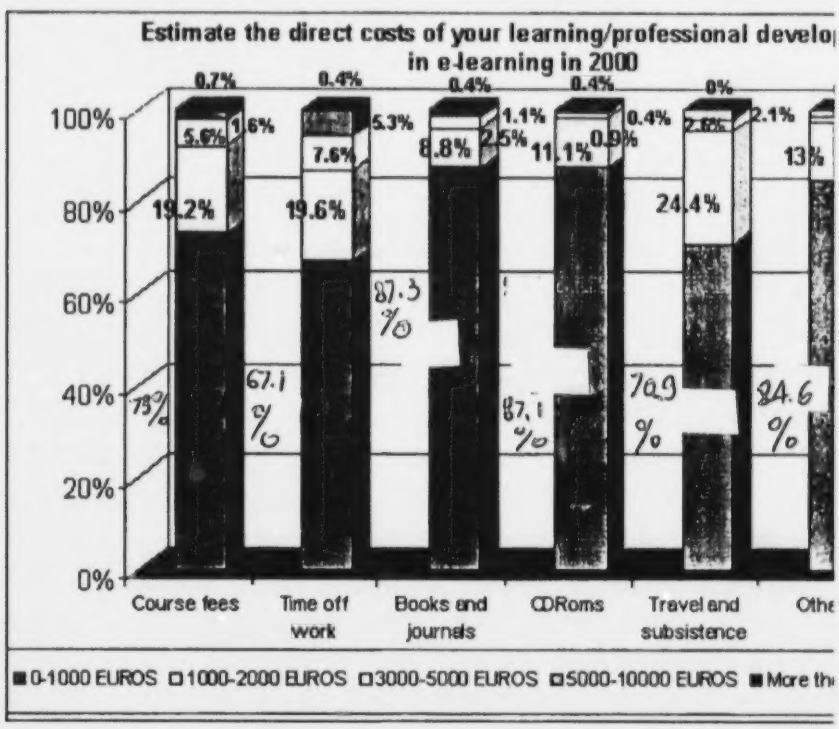

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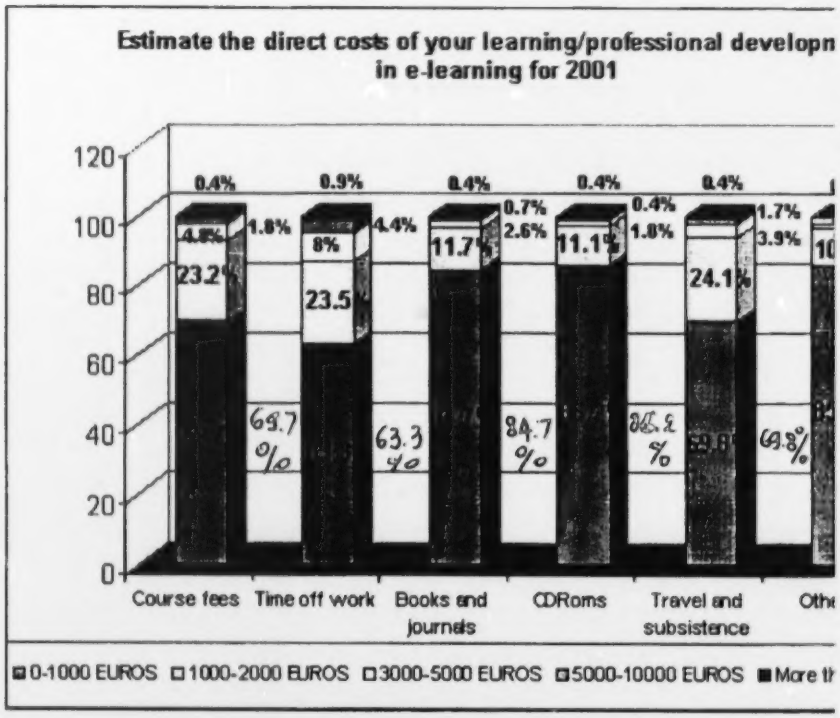

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